

Toska

by FoolishWit

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Summary: Following the events of Episode VII. Rey drags an unconscious Kylo Ren onto the Millennium Falcon before escaping the planet. Angst, eventual spicy content (rating will change). Reylo.

## 1. Chapter 1

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Author's Note: So. This will get spicier. I promise. This is Artificial Intelligence's fault: AI, I point the blame squarely at you.

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Toska

Chapter 1

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Rey's thighs burned, and her fingers threatened to let go as she struggled to pull the unconscious form toward her ship.

She thought of it as her ship now that she was the only one left to pilot it off the planet.

She should have just made the last minute repair and taken off, minutes behind Chewie and Finn in the emergency med transport. Or left the ship there entirely. She could be safe right now, jumping into hyperspace and speeding away from the rock that was currently shaking to pieces beneath her.

With a loud, primal growl, she tugged with renewed force at the black tunic she had fisted in her hands and the body it was covering moved

another few inches through the snow.

She shouldn't be saving this man.

Stopping to pant, sweating despite the chill in the snowy air, Rey wiped at her mouth, shook out her hands, and bent to take a firmer hold of Kylo Ren.

Tired and losing patience, she gave too violent a heave. Her world tilted and she slipped sideways, her feet slipping on a rock camouflaged under the snow beneath her. She slammed down heavily on the ground, pain sparking through her elbow where she caught herself before her head hit the hard earth. A frustrated scream ripped from her and she kicked fiercely at the body that was delaying her escape.

\_He's not worth it, he's not worth it, he's not worth it-\_

Standing, Rey wiped her hands on her tunic and resumed her task.

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She left him in a heap on the grated floor, just far enough inside the Falcon that she was able to close the doors. Sprinting to the cockpit, she began frantically punching buttons, throwing switches, and praying that her new prisoner didn't wake up during take off.

Or, she amended, any time before she was able to tie him up in what passed for a med bay on this ship.

She watched the screens and lights on the panels in front of her as she fought with the controls, swearing fairly impressively in several languages. She could tell the planet behind her was breaking up, its core temperature rising to the point of a star-if she could trust the read-outs, which she wasn't sure she could, since a growing list of a dozen or so things were obviously wrong with the ship after the less-than-stellar crash landing just hours before.

The hyperdrive refused to engage, and after rushing back and forth between different parts of the engine, the cockpit, and the repair bay for the better part of an hour as they drifted in space, Rey finally slid down the gentle curve of the wall next to the still-breathing form of Kylo Ren, almost certain she'd done enough to keep them flying for long enough to eat something and maybe even get some sleep. She'd picked a planet nearby that they could head toward, slowly, without the use of the hyperdrive. Rey closed her eyes and sent a plea out to the stars that she'd be able to trade something in the cargo hold for the parts she needed to get the Falcon repaired once they landed there.

In several weeks time.

Everyone would assume she was dead.

Rey sighed, frowning. She'd have to work on the coms at some point. Try to get a message out. She'd had to strip some of the wiring to use as a patch during a particularly tense few minutes soon after take off when the oxygenation system had threatened to sabotage her

survival plans.

Opening her eyes, Rey groaned as she leaned forward and pushed torn black fabric away from Kylo's face. The burned slash she'd left across it looked horrible. Caked with dirt, it was probably going to get infected if it wasn't washed out soon, and would definitely leave a scar, and yep, Rey was too exhausted to care. Hell, the man wore a mask most of the time anyway as an intimidation tactic. She'd just supplied him with a much better reason to maintain the habit.

Rey continued to stare in his direction without really seeing him as she mentally reviewed what should come next.

Food? At some point before she slept. Or after. She'd gone hungry before and knew this time wasn't going to be the worst in terms of length of time between meals.

Getting cleaned up? Priority. Scrapes and superficial burns stung all over her body, and her back and neck were screaming at her. There had to be some good painkillers on this ship that she could take and knock herself out withâ€|

\_After\_ tying her prisoner down. That would have to come first. She couldn't risk falling asleep with him free.

Trying to talk herself into believing this was just another haul of heavy parts from a successful salvage run back on Jakku, Rey pushed herself to her feet, sighed, and began to drag Kylo Ren toward the med bay.

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Rey was still inspecting the dark bruise that wrapped around her torso when Kylo regained consciousness. She heard his low groan behind her and froze for a half second before returning to her examination, refusing to look in his direction. She was confident in how she'd secured him to the exam table, and he didn't deserve to be acknowledged yet.

A single thought and dozens of potential answers swirled in her mind. \_Why\_ had she saved him? For information, to use as a hostage, leverage, a prize, for instruction, revenge, justice, Leia, Han--

"\_Release me\_." The order was growled with authority and malice.

Rey twisted to dab ointment on the last of her scrapes she could reach, on the curve where her back joined her hip. She'd stripped down to her loose pants, and unwound the majority of her torso wrap. Still denying him eye contact, Rey bent to pick up her tunic and the rest of her previously shed clothing, and walked out of the room, tossing a cold, "No," over her shoulder as she left.

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After several hours of sleep and a meal consisting purely of food that could be eaten straight out of the package without requiring other preparation, Rey returned to the med bay. Her prisoner was exactly where she'd left him, a livid expression on his face. Pausing

in the doorway, Rey leaned against the supports, regarding him carefully from the distance. The mix of metal restraints, thick straps, and heavy rope might have seemed excessive to some, but Rey was unwilling to take any chances with him.

Her muscles hummed, on high alert. She waited, wondering if he'd speak to her. Demand his freedom again.

Silence, and a continued stormy expression was all she received from the man on the med table.

"I haven't decided exactly what I want to do with you yet," she said finally. "But almost every one of my options works best if you don't die of sepsis on this ship in the next seventy-two hours." She took a single, ginger step into the room, somehow managing to retain an air of control and lack of fear. "Your face isâ€| unfortunateâ€| but that wound in your side is what might kill you."

No response.

Rey moved toward the cabinets that held the medical supplies. "If you want to live, you're going to stay still while I-"

Her words died in her throat, choked off by an unseen hand. She struggled, unable to gasp for air for several seconds. In her mind, she scrambled for a grip on something, purchase on a slippery surface, liquid that couldn't be grasped, until finally she screwed her eyes shut. Bearing down, she shoved as hard as she could in all directions. The pressure at her throat disappeared, and air flooded into her lungs as everything in the room not bolted down rattled. A few bottles and taller tubes tipped over, and one clattered to the ground, smashing into shards.

Rey turned and looked at Kylo, frowning. "\_Your\_ choice." Without a backward glance, she left.

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"It's been several hours," Rey pointed out, sitting cross-legged in the hallway outside the med bay. "I've fixed one of the laser cannons and started work on the subspace radio already. Pretty productive, if I do say so myself. What have \_you\_ been up to?" She paused, as if expecting a reply, which she did not. "Nothing? Huh. Well, I suppose you've been awfully busy lately, what with the torture, kidnapping, and mass genocide. I'm sure you feel you deserve a bit of a rest." Rey rolled her head in the direction of her prisoner, eyeing him through the doorway. "Feel up to a bit of medical treatment yet?" she asked, one eyebrow arched. When she didn't get a response, she stood and walked into the room.

A heavy box of supplies shot toward her, and she ducked, reflexively pulling the lightsaber hilt she'd kept attached to her belt into her hand. The next three objects came at her in quick succession from around the room, flying off of shelves and countertops. Each one was blocked with the blade, creating small showers of chemicals and glass as they were cleaved in half.

"Those are the medical supplies you're going to need if you want to survive!" Rey pointed out, backing toward the exit, saber still held at the ready in front of her. "Are you going to continue to throw a

fit? Or are you going to let me in to help you?" she asked.

Kylo Ren struggled and surged against his restraints, his face red with the effort. A grunt seemed to tear itself from him, but he didn't answer the question.

"Maybe later, then," Rey said harshly, turning to leave.

Halfway down the hallway her steps faltered slightly, and she paused, her breath catching as a furious howl of rage erupted from the room she'd left, accompanied by the sound of smashing glass and the crash of heavy objects hitting the floor.

As abruptly as the noise began, it died, leaving Rey listening only to the consistent hum of the Falcon's engines.

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TBC.

## 2. Chapter 2

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Author's notes at the end.

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Toska

## Chapter 2

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When Kylo finally allowed Rey's entrance into the med bay without offensive action, she could tell he wasn't doing well. He'd lost a lot of blood, and while the green tinge of his clammy skin worried her on a humanitarian level, the part of her that pictured Han in the pilot's seat every time she stepped foot in the cockpit felt it was barely the beginning of what the man deserved.

They didn't talk as she gathered supplies, stepping around the mess on the floor. She approached him slowly, holding his gaze. He didn't flinch, but his expression was subdued. Leaving the majority of his restraints in place, she unhooked the thick canvas strap that held his midsection down. His hands clenched into fists, and when she looked at his face he rolled his head toward the opposite wall. Rey looked back down at his hands and realized they were shaking, ever so slightly. He'd probably balled them up to keep her from noticing.

"You don't look great," Rey said, stating the obvious as a shiver ran through Kylo's body. "I'm going to take a look at your side, okay? Justâ€| stay still."

Rey knew very little about medicine, never having had access to anything more advanced than soap and various ointments and oils. But most jars and boxes were labeled, and Finn had shown her several

things while they were on their way to Takodana.

After cleansing the wound, Rey fumbled through the contents of one of the drawers, looking for-

"The blue one."

Rey turned to look at the man still strapped to the table behind her.  
"What?"

"The one with the blue label. It'sâ€¦ it'll help."

Kylo was staring straight up at the ceiling, his fists still clenched. Even from across the room she could see his shaking was getting worse. Grabbing one of the hyponeedles with the blue label, she returned to his side, squinting at the small print on the side of the tube.

"Here," Kylo said, straining his right hand to press against his thigh. "Right here, in the muscle, justâ€¦" With a sigh of frustration, he rolled his wrist as much as he could, given the wide cuff around it, and looked pointedly down at his open palm. "Just give it to me, I'll do it."

Rey hesitated briefly, but when Kylo gave another shiver and a wince, she handed the small device to him and watched as he craned his neck up, flipped the cap off with his thumb, and jammed the small needle through the fabric of his pants into his leg. It gave a small hiss, and Kylo let his head fall back onto the table. He withdrew the empty needle from his leg and held it toward Rey. When she eyed it suspiciously but didn't move to take it, Kylo realized she viewed it as a potential weapon, so he rotated his hand slightly and let it clatter to the ground.

"How many of those do we have?" he asked.

"The drawer's full."

Kylo nodded. "Anything with a white label?"

"Just a few," Rey answered cautiously.

"One now. Save the rest." Kylo was starting to breathe easier, but his color was still terrible.

Grabbing the requested medication and a new package of gauze, Rey returned to her prisoner's side, popping the cap off the white needle herself. "Same leg?"

"Doesn't matter."

Rey tossed the second used device into a waste bin behind her, and pulled a stool closer so she could sit while she covered Kylo's wound. "You're not shaking anymore. That stuff works fastâ€¦" she murmured.

"Mmm. Wears off fast, too," he replied.

"How long have you got before you need another one?" Rey asked. Concern for other living creatures had always been her default

setting, but it made her uncomfortable in this particular situation.

Kylo turned his head to look at Rey, his expression wary, but curious. "A few hours. I'll let you know." After a pause, he added, "How are you?"

Rey looked up at him, unable to hide her surprise. She wasn't used to anyone showing concern for her general well-being, and multiple people had done so recently. Dropping her eyes back to what she was doing, Rey considered lying, or ignoring the question. "Why do you ask? Quite recently you were trying to kill me. Now you suddenly care?"

"I wasn't trying to kill you. I was trying to kill the deserter— I was only trying to beat you."

Rey pushed harder than necessary on Kylo's wound, and he hissed, arching his neck back.

"You didn't beat me," Rey said, her tone hard.

"A fact I'm well aware of right now," Kylo said, his voice still strained with discomfort. "And since it's obvious I can't get out of these restraints and you're the one flying this ship— I'm trying to confirm that you're not going to drop dead and leave me to starve to death tied up in here. So. How are you?"

Reaching for more gauze, Rey again considered ignoring him, but instead she licked her lips and answered, "I'm fine."

Several minutes passed in silence before Rey spoke again, surprising not only herself but the man in front of her, too, if the slight change in his expression was anything to go by. "I just— I feel like I got thrown from a speeder. Everything that happened over the last few days has seemed— sped up, somehow. And now—" Rey shrugged. "Now we're just— here. Crawling slowly through space without a working hyperdrive. I feel like I still have this— momentum— and there's only a finite number of tasks on which I can use it."

Kylo looked around the room. "After everything it's seen, the Falcon needs several years worth of repairs," he pointed out. "You won't lack for things to fix on this ship if you're looking for something to do."

"I lack parts," Rey said matter-of-factly. "I know what needs fixing. But I can't build a new quadex power core from salvage scrap and unfiltered water waste." A final piece of tape was applied to the large square of gauze on his side, and Rey scraped her stool loudly along the ground toward Kylo's head. "Now. Let's see about your face."

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Rey appeared in the doorway of the med bay regularly over the next few hours. Medicine was administered, bandages were changed, and meals were supplied.

"This would be easier if you'd free one of my hands," Kylo had argued

while being fed.

"You're right, it would," Rey agreed, continuing to break pieces off of the protein bar to drop into her bound prisoner's mouth.

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Kylo's color returned to normal within the first few days of the journey, and Rey replaced fewer and fewer of his restraints each time she removed them to clean his wounds and change his bandages. Eventually, just his wrists remained shackled, the cuffs tethering him to the wall by a long, heavy chain. Rey wondered what this room's original purpose had been before the previous owners of the ship had turned it into the make-shift medical bay.

Her visits became less frequent once she allowed her prisoner a certain amount of freedom. He was able to administer his own medication and tend to his own wounds. She delivered food and water every few hours.

She said nothing each time, and he didn't thank her.

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Rey set a package of food on the nearest counter and turned to leave when she heard Kylo's chain scrape on the floor as he shifted from his perch on the med table.

"How are the repairs going?" he asked. His voice was controlled and almost casual, which Rey thought seemed out of place considering his current situation. Then again, his voice had practically been a purr when he'd interrogated her aboard his ship, so she figured judging this man's intentions on the quality of his tone was a waste of time.

"Fine," she replied, guarded.

"Still no hyperdrive?"

Rey leveled a cool stare at him. "Impatient to get where we're going?"

Kylo seemed to study her, tilting his head to one side. "What do you plan to do with me?"

Rey's eyes slid away to a shelf along one wall, and she shifted her weight slightly before straightening again and squaring her shoulders. "I still haven't decided, though I'm leaning toward turning you over to the New Republic. I'm sure you'd be useful to them." Looking back at Kylo, she added, "I'm also certain your mother has one or two things to say to you."

If she was hoping for an emotional reaction, she was disappointed. Kylo nodded thoughtfully and agreed, "That's a safe assumption."

Their controlled, careful conversation was unnerving Rey. "Why did you do it?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

"I had to," Kylo answered evenly, correctly guessing what she was referring to.

Rey's voice hardened and gained strength. "No, you made that choice; there's always a choice-

"What's the most difficult decision you've ever made?" Kylo interrupted.

Rey glared at him in silence.

"Did you have time to think about it? How much time? Minutes? Years?" he asked, taking a step toward her. "What were the stakes?" Kylo's brow creased, as if he was puzzling out an answer. "Was there anyone else involved in the decision?"

Rey stood her ground as Kylo continued to advance on her. When he neared the end of his chain, he stopped. His voice was low as he bent his head forward to ask, "When you finally made that choiceâ€¦ was there ever a time, afterâ€¦ that you regretted it?"

"Regretting the murder of your father doesn't bring him back," Rey said with quiet intensity.

Kylo shook his head and swallowed. "Nothing's going to bring him back. Han Solo is gone."

"You still haven't told me why," Rey protested. "Why did you do it?"

Turning back toward the exam table, Kylo retreated away from Rey and his meal. "I had to," he repeated, though his voice echoed hollow the second time.

"What did you gain by killing him?" Rey pressed, almost pleading with him for an answer.

Kylo sniffed and raised his head as he perched again on the edge of the only furniture in the room. "Nothing, as it turns out. Considering I've been captured and am currently on my way to lifelong imprisonment or death at the hands of the Republicâ€¦ I gained nothing. When you captured me you disrupted my plans, and made his murderâ€¦." Kylo paused, contemplating which word to use. "...pointless."

Rey drew a deep breath.

"Meaningless," Kylo added, narrowing his eyes. "Empty."

Kicking dirt over the flames of indignation and fury that flared in her chest, Rey huffed a furious breath through her nose. "You said you regret killing your father. Is that because of the act itself? Or because it gained you nothing, and instead contributed to your capture? Your failure?"

"You're confusing hypotheticals with admissions," Kylo cautioned darkly. "I never said I regretted my decision."

With a disgusted growl, Rey spun on her heel and disappeared out the door.

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TBC.

A/N: Gotta make the kids fight for a while first. Otherwise the spicy stuff doesn't feel like you worked for it. ;)

### 3. Chapter 3

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Author's notes at the end.

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Toska

### Chapter 3

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"I don't believe you; I think you're lying to me," Rey accused, striding into the med bay with purpose. It had been almost twenty-four hours since she'd last visited.

"You're a survivor. It's easy to see that about you," Kylo intoned softly from where he lay, stretched out on his back on the exam table, his knees bent into the air to prevent his feet from dangling off the edge of the short surface. "What's the worst thing you've ever done to survive?"

"I don't have to tell you anything-"

"We could always try looking into each other's minds again," he offered, a slight sarcastic bent to his voice. "Since that worked so well for both of us last time. You could see how I really feel about the death of Han Solo, and Iâ€|" Kylo swung his legs down and pushed up to a seated position, the chains rattling as he dropped his wrists in his lap. "...I could find out what lengths you've stooped to in order to live another day."

"When people are trying to steal from you- -when something is trying to eat you- -you fight back, yes," Rey spat. "But I've never blown up entire planets. I've never slaughtered otherwise peaceful villages to bolster my infamous reputation."

"You don't have a reputation; how do you know what you would do with one?"

Rey clamped her mouth shut, angrily swallowing several insults that would do no good in her quest to make her point. "We'll find out," she hissed. "When I deliver you as my prisoner to the Republic I'll be well on my way to having a reputation; don't you think?"

Kylo gave a single, serious nod. "I look forward to that, actually, yes. Not the imprisonment," he qualified, waving a dismissive hand, "but watching what you do with your new-found fame. The Force is

strong with you, and there are people who will want to exploit that. Luke Skywalker might slink back out of whatever hole he's been hiding in all these years. The government- -what's left of it- -will most likely try to prop you up and make you some kind of a mascot." Kylo had been letting his gaze wander around the room, but he cut his eyes back to Rey sharply. "Snoke might find you. Turn you into me." Shrugging, the intensity of his last option dissipated quickly. "So many potential outcomes."

Rey shook her head, animosity seeming to itch across her skin like rough fabric. "Have you \_ever\_ \_tried\_ to be a good person? Is there anything left in you that cares for others? Anything that desires peace? Anything that wants to do something \_important\_-?"

"I \_was\_ \_doing\_ something important!" Kylo growled, launching off the table toward Rey.

Caught off guard, she stumbled back a few paces, out of his reach, and watched as the chains snapped tight, halting Kylo's forward momentum.

"I was doing something great, and \_you\_- -you're \_no-one\_, you're a scavenger from an all-but-forgotten planet- -yet you have more raw power than I could ever hope for, and you-" Kylo's snarled speech was interrupted by a sharp, barked laugh. "You don't even know how to control it! You don't know what it is! What it \_could be\_. You're like an \_infant\_ with a room full of weapons and millions of credits to your name; it's a waste. \_You're\_ a waste." Breathing hard, Kylo gave a harsh, futile yank on his restraints in frustration. "I've always understood that life isn't fair, but this is really rubbing it in. You have \_everything\_ I want\_." Kylo's eyes raked up and down Rey's body as if the natural talent she possessed was a visible thing he could observe on her. "And the way you're ignoring it is pathetic. Insulting. \_Offensive\_."

"\_Offensive\_?" Rey repeated, horrified. "The fact that I'm not a mass murderer is \_offensive\_ to you?" Her voice hitched up higher as she continued. "But, no- -let's just talk about what \_you\_ have that \_I\_ \_want. Do you understand what you threw away? A family? A mother and a father and a home and a \_life\_?" Rey slammed a palm flat against her sternum. "Do you know what I would give to have had that? \_Any\_ of that? Even for a \_moment\_?!"

Kylo scoffed. "Those are the wishes of a child- -"

"Do not presume you understand what my life is like," Rey interrupted, stabbing a finger in his direction. "How a childhood of loneliness, and fear, and- -"

"You don't think I've ever felt alone? You don't think I understand fear?" Kylo bellowed, his shoulders hunching forward even as his hands held him back.

"You walked away from it! All of it! How could you \_possibly\_ feel alone or afraid when you have a family?!" Rey wailed, flinging her arms wide in exasperation.

Kylo froze for a moment, as if he'd realized there was no point in trying to explain himself to someone whose fundamental building blocks were so different from his own.

"If you're unable to accept that a family does not equal safety or happiness, then you will \_never\_ understand me\_," he said slowly, as if speaking to a child.

When Rey spoke again her voice had dropped to a more normal volume, though it was laced with sarcastic disbelief. "You didn't like your family, so youâ€¦| blew up half the Republic?"

"'Home' is obviously an important concept to you," Kylo said, his side aching from the strain and effort of the fight. "But family was only ever a \_very\_ small piece of Han Solo's son, and like I told him- -" Kylo leaned in again, his voice a tight rumble, "- \_just\_ \_before I killed him\_- -Ben Solo was destroyed long ago."

"You \_are\_ Ben Solo. Changing your name doesn't erase who you are," Rey insisted desperately. "The mask, the name, the voiceâ€¦| it's \_coating\_. That's all."

"The fact that I chose a different path than the one my family designed for me shouldn'tâ€¦|" Kylo huffed out a breath, and began again, turning to pace away from Rey. "Children should not be forced to become what their parents wish them to grow into."

"Children should not be murdered by the millions when their planets explode," Rey volleyed back.

Kylo returned to sit on the edge of the exam table. After a long moment of silence, he knit his brows together and asked, "What are some of the other options you're entertaining? Regarding what to do with me?"

Rey hadn't seen the topic change coming, and she opened her mouth to reply before snapping it shut again, needing to think about how best to answer, if at all.

"You're considering my offer. To teach you."

Rey glowered at the man across from her, annoyed that he'd guessed, though not entirely surprised that he had.

"Your powerâ€¦| with my guidanceâ€¦| could be \_incredible\_," Kylo coaxed, his words barely audible. "Together, we could-"

"Together we could end a lot of lives," Rey objected, shaking her head in disappointment. "Together we could destroy a good part of civilization. Together we could be terrible."

"Yes," Kylo agreed, the slash across his face making his expression even more aggressive. "We could."

"You say that like it's a good thing," Rey muttered, turning to leave.

Kylo nodded as her form disappeared around the curve of the hall. "It could be a \_great\_ thing."

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TBC.

A/N: I don't think I'm aiming for super authentic character actions here. A little OOC is fine with me, because there's only so much you can do with the information we got in TFA. Soâ€¦ let's see how ambiguous we can make Rey. I don't have fun writing pure saviors anyway. You've been warned.

#### 4. Chapter 4

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#### Chapter 4

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"Have you found the hidden compartment in the forward cargo bay yet?" Kylo asked as Rey passed his open door.

She wanted to investigate the cause of some worrisome readings coming from the concussion missile launcher, but she halted her forward progress and backed up several steps so she could see him. He was seated on the ground in the middle of the room, his eyes closed. "What hidden compartment?" she asked.

"There's a dented panel with peeling orange paint, all scraped up. Claw marks, tooth marks. Along the floor. Reach in and to the left, behind the pipes."

"And what can I expect to find?" Rey asked suspiciously.

Kylo didn't move from his meditation position. "All manner of things have been stored back there. I know what I'm hoping for, but it could very well be empty."

Rey narrowed her eyes and continued on her way to check on the potentially malfunctioning weaponry.

Almost immediately, alarms began to sound, harsh and constant, accompanied by the muffled rumbles of explosions in a distant part of the ship. Kylo waited, tense, as the lights flickered, the growl of the engines cut out, and the Falcon shuddered around him.

After several minutes, the alarms ceased and the ship seemed to steady, though the engines remained silent.

When the alarms didn't begin again, and the lights powered back on, Kylo assumed the problem had been corrected. He shifted slightly and attempted to meditate again.

His stillness was interrupted, however, when Rey rushed into the room and hurriedly began rifling through the drawers and cabinets on the far wall, her back to Kylo.

She smelled of burnt flesh and accelerant.

Kylo pushed off the floor and approached her, but stopped short when Rey twisted toward him and flung out her arm, leveling a blaster at his chest. "\_Stay where you are\_", she ground out through clenched teeth.

Obedying the command, Kylo dropped his gaze to Rey's left arm. It was blistered and blackened from wrist to elbow. Her sleeve was charred, and her hand shook with the pain.

"That looks angry," he commented.

"Back up," Rey demanded, stabbing the blaster in his direction again for emphasis.

Kylo stood his ground. "Or I could just take that weapon from youâ€|" Raising his hands, he pulled at the blaster from his position across the room. It gave a small shudder in Rey's hand before her grip tightened to steady it.

"I don't think so," Rey shot back. Her breaths came fast and heavy, and she hated that she wasn't able to control the physical reaction Kylo was obviously mistaking for weakness. She swallowed hard, trying not to pant. "Now \_back up\_", she repeated.

After a moment of listening to nothing but Rey's hard breaths, Kylo gave a small shake of his head. "You know I can stop a blaster bolt? Midair. So even if you pull the trigger-

"How \_many \_can you stop? I could keep pulling this trigger until we find outâ€|?" Rey offered, her eyes narrowed.

Though he didn't back up, Kylo's stance relaxed slightly, and Rey took it as a small sign of acquiescence. She kept the blaster aimed at him while she pawed through drawers of medical supplies. When she'd amassed a pile of gauze, bacta, burn ointment, and bandages, she glanced back at the man across the room. Kylo said nothing, but continued to watch her carefully as she seemed to weigh her options.

Her complete lack of trust appeared to win out over her desire for expedient treatment and relief from the pain in her left arm. She gathered her supplies as best she could, wincing, before finally dropping the blaster to her side and disappearing from the room.

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Several hours later, Rey walked back into the med bay without ceremony and eased to the ground, sitting with her back against the far cabinets. She sat just beyond the length of Kylo's tether, facing him where he sat on the exam table.

Kylo nodded at the old bottle in her right hand. "I see you found the compartment I mentioned earlier."

Rey sniffed and lifted the bottle to drink some of the contents. She cringed as she swallowed, and set the mystery alcohol down on the

floor next to her, leaving her hand draped possessively around the neck of it.

Kylo gestured at the bottle. "May I?" he asked, despite knowing what the answer would be.

Rey ignored the question and sighed. "When we were on Starkiller you brought up my dreams." She looked up at Kylo and held his gaze. "What do you dream of?"

Kylo tilted his head slightly and said nothing.

Yearning for an answer, Rey pushed, clarifying her real question. "How do you sleep at night?" she asked, her eyebrows knitting together. "What do you say to the voice inside you that implores you to be good? I meanâ€¦ I'm sure the voice is small, and you've done your best to lock it away, but it \_has to still be there\_. Do you ever consider doing the right thing?"

"Appealing to the good man you think must still be inside me somewhere is a foolish and futile pursuit," Kylo warned her.

"I know being good isn't always easy-" Rey continued, hitching one knee up and bracing her foot on the floor in front of her. "Is it just too difficult for you? Is it more of an unwillingness to put in the effort? Are bad behavior and violence just the easier way out?"

"You think the path I've chosen was the easy one?"

"Why else would someone \_choose \_to be bad?"

Kylo shook his head. "'Good' and 'bad' are too simplistic. They're imagined notions that have no practical place in this world."

"You're telling me you don't even believe in the concept of good and evil?"

Kylo exhaled sharply through his nose and rolled his head to look up at the wall next to him. "It's uninterestingâ€¦ and not very useful."

Rey stared at him, silently, until he looked back in her direction. He realized quickly that she wasn't disagreeing with him, but instead waiting for him to go into further detail. She was still unwilling to speak to him in order to prompt his continuation, but at least she wasn't arguing with everything he said simply because he said it.

"'Right' and 'wrong' are similarly problematic, because they're a matter of opinion. 'Intelligence' and 'stupidity' are better." Kylo paused before adding, "'Powerful' and 'weak' are the best."

"The best for what?" Rey challenged.

Kylo rolled one shoulder slightly, and Rey regretted her decision to sit on the floor. She was naturally much smaller than Kylo, and his imposing frame suddenly seemed even larger as she looked up at where he sat on the exam table. She should have remained standing.

The idea exhausted her, and she reached for the bottle again, taking a gulp of the terrible liquid.

"You can endeavor to be 'good'," Kylo explained in a low, quiet voice. "But how do you measure that? Define it? If it's not definable, it's also not attainable. Why work toward a goal that can never be achieved? Those are the actions of an unintelligent, naive mind," he finished with disdain ghosting through his words.

"So you strive to be powerful." Rey quirked one eyebrow. "Mentally?" She took Kylo's even stare as agreement. She scanned down the length of him before returning to look him in the eye. "Physically?"

\_Obviously. \_

"Emotionally?"

Rey noticed a slight change in Kylo's jawline as he clenched his teeth. Rey opened her mouth to continue her line of inquiry, but before she could make a sound the bottle she held was wrenched from her grasp by an unseen force. It shot across the room and Kylo caught it easily in his open, waiting hand.

Rey watched, quietly frustrated, as Kylo lifted the bottle to his lips to take a mouthful. Setting the drink to one side, he nodded in Rey's direction. "You want to know how I do that. You've done it once, but you haven't been able to recreate it since." Kylo nodded again. "You've tried."

Annoyed at his arrogance, and impatient due to the alcohol, Rey pushed herself to her feet. "When all you exhibit is power, and no reliability, people won't trust you. How could they?" Rey shook her head. "I'll never trust you to teach me \_anything\_."

"Then you'll always be weak," he replied calmly.

Rey grabbed a metal jar that rested on the counter next to her and flung it at Kylo. With a practiced, quick gesture, he batted it to the side before it came anywhere near him. He pushed himself off the med bay table and stalked toward Rey. "You think of power as offensive action, but it's \_defensive\_ as well. If you're the most powerful thing in the room, who's going to hurt you?"

Rey cut her eyes down to Kylo's bandaged flank. "Looks like you've still got some work to do," she said. Picking up another small metal container, she threw it past Kylo, hitting the bottle he'd left sitting on the table behind him. It tipped, spilling its contents over the hard surface, and rolled to the floor where it smashed.

"Enjoy the rest of your drink," Rey said as she left him alone once again.

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TBC.

A/N: Huh. I really thought they'd be closer to the end of their fight

by now, but they just keep saying mean things to each other, and I can do nothing but write it down. They're the bosses here, after all.

## 5. Chapter 5

Disclaimer: Not mine, in any way, shape, or form. Not making money from this.

Author's notes at the end.

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Toska

## Chapter 5

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"What did you plan to do with Snoke if I accepted your offer of instruction?" Rey asked, setting three small packages of food on the counter on the far side of Kylo's room. Kylo looked up from where he was inspecting the point in his restraints that divided from one chain into the two leading to his wrist cuffs.

"Do with him?" Kylo asked, requesting clarification.

"I was under the impression that there can only ever be two Siths: master and apprentice." Rey leaned against the counter and crossed her arms over her chest.

"Who told you I was a Sith?" Kylo asked evenly.

Rey hadn't expected that response, and she fell silent, struggling to reorient herself in the conversation.

"Are you accepting my offer?"

"No." Her answer was firm and quick.

Kylo nodded understanding, and Rey got the distinct impression that he only did so in order to let her off the hook.

"Do you have friends?" Rey asked.

It was Kylo's turn to look marginally surprised.

"Anyone you're close to?" Rey gave an indifferent shrug of one shoulder. "I meanâ€| I've seen how you treat your \_family\_â€| What other kind of relationships do you have? Doing what you do, living how you liveâ€| Who do you have?"

"Is your intent to compare numbers?" Kylo replied. "How many fellow scavengers and thieves did you consider yourself close to on Jakku?"

"None. And the minute I finally got off that planet and made three friends, you murdered or maimed both men in the span of a few hours." Rey set her jaw. "And I can promise youâ€| you royally pissed off the

wookie, too."

A rueful smile graced Kylo's face.

"So that's my answer," Rey pressed. "What's yours?"

"Friends and family are not a luxury a man in my line of work is allowed," Kylo said dismissively, waving a nonchalant hand.

"No-one?" Rey dug, narrowing her eyes in skepticism. "You talked to no-one? Confided in no-one? Fellow knights? First Order officers? Snoke?"

Kylo scoffed, breathing out through his nose harshly in an aborted laugh. "No, I would not consider the Supreme Leader a friend."

"Did you have anyone you could talk to?" Rey demanded, wishing for a straight answer. Wishing for a clue to help her understand the man in front of her.

"You'll probably be dismayed to learn I considered you for the position," Kylo said. He laced his long fingers together in his lap.

Rey shifted, placing her hands on the counter on either side of her hips, her fingers curling over the edge of the hard, silver surface. "You made a point to comment on my solitude when you looked inside my mind," she continued, her voice softer. "Did you think I was so desperate for companionship that I'd just fall at your feet the instant you offered me the chance to belong somewhere? That I wouldn't care what kind of monstrosities you've committed? That I'd be willing to commit them, too?"

Kylo didn't respond.

"How long was I in that chair before I woke up?" Rey refused to stop her interrogation just because her subject refused to answer. "Had you already dug around in my mind while I was out?"

"No." The negative was offered guilelessly.

"Could you have?"

"You would have woken up at the intrusion, but yes."

"Would it have been more difficult?"

Kylo shook his head. "Easier."

"Then why didn't you?"

Kylo pursed his lips, considering his answer. "When you woke, you called me a monster in a mask." Spreading his hands in front of himself, palm up, he continued, "Why would you join me if that was how I behaved?"

"I thought you always wanted to be the most powerful thing in the room?" Rey retorted. "Digging what you wanted from my thoughts would have been a fairly decent demonstration of power."

"Yes, but as you so eloquently put it last night, occasionally brute force isn't the best way to inspire trust and confidence," Kylo pointed out.

"And that's what you wanted?"

"I wanted you," Kylo specified.

Rey froze, her next question disappearing from her lips.

"You're powerful. I could sense it immediatelyâ€¦ though I had no idea just how powerful until you managed to push me out and-

"What makes you think you can have me?" Rey interrupted, pushing off from the counter and taking several steps into the room as if she was challenging her companion to something, still stuck on his previous statement.

Slowly, Kylo mirrored Rey's actions, sliding from his seat on the exam table until he was standing across from her. "What did you think I meant by that?" he asked, his voice quiet.

"Did you lose on purpose? On Starkiller? Did you let me win?" Rey asked, ignoring him and changing topics once again.

"It had already been a fairly taxing day by that point," Kylo drawled, tilting his head to one side as he followed her staccato line of questioning. "I didn't let you win, but I also didn't want to... damage the force user I was trying to recruit." Kylo took several more steps in her direction before stopping to shrug, "And I underestimated you. I didn't think you'd be nearly the opponent you proved to be." Locking eyes with Rey, he gave a single, slow nod. "I won't be doing that again."

"Is that a threat?"

"More of a promise," Kylo corrected.

"Promises mean nothing if the parties don't trust one another," Rey cautioned.

"You're beginning to trust me," Kylo stated, matter-of-fact.

"Really? And how did you come to that conclusion?" Rey raised her eyebrows, her hands settling on her hips.

Kylo took another step toward her, his chains scraping along the ground. "You haven't incapacitated or drugged me. You've reduced my restraints to a pair of shackles that, given time, I'll be able to work loose from the wall behind me." He took another step forward, invading Rey's personal space. She resisted the urge to step back.

"And you're willing to stand within reach of me," Kylo added, leaning toward her slightly.

Rey kept her feet stationary, her eyes trained at Kylo's chest,

avoiding his eyes. He watched her silently, his form still and tall. Her breaths were coming faster, and her shoulders rose and fell with each one. Swallowing, she let her gaze trail across his torso and down one of his arms.

He didn't seem to have any trouble whatsoever controlling his breathing, and his hands hung without tension at his sides.

A flash of worry passed through Rey's mind as she considered the possibility that she'd misread the situation entirely. She was inches from the man she'd slashed and burned and taken prisoner, and while he had said he wanted her, she hadn't taken the time to dissect the statement and examine her own feelings on the matter.

He was a killer. He was a monster. He was her prisoner.

He was so close.

No. No matter what, this situation was inappropriate. Dragging her eyes away from the wide cuff she'd placed on his wrist, Rey looked up at Kylo's face, still hoping to confirm that this wasn't completely one-sided; an imaginary tension in her mind only. Tilting her chin up, she found Kylo had lowered his head, inclining it to one side so she felt the breath from his open lips on her face. After another several motionless breaths, he leaned down further, his eyes on her mouth.

Her movement fast and sharp, Rey pulled her head back and raised a hand to brace against Kylo's body, her palm splayed over his lower ribs on his uninjured side. She wasn't out of reach, but the statement was clear.

Kylo froze. His expression remained carefully controlled, and Rey honestly wasn't sure if she hoped it was just a facade to cover disappointment or not.

Neither party broke eye contact at the sound of Kylo's chains moving. He raised his hands with an exquisite and deliberate slowness, but inches before he was able to cup her face, his length of chain ran out, and his open palms stopped abruptly, midair.

For the first time since he'd stood up, his face reflected something other than complete detachment and serenity. A flash of annoyance clouded his features for a fleeting second, and he exhaled sharply.

"Take them off," he rumbled softly.

Rey felt a simultaneous thrill at the level of control she had over the situation, and a deep, spreading horror at the idea of taking advantage of a man she'd had chained to the wall for over a week. It also occurred to her that he could very well be manipulating her.

Refusing to let any emotion show, she tilted her head slightly, as if studying her prisoner, and took three measured steps backward.

"No."

Kylo opened his mouth as if to argue, and Rey braced for threats or a show of force. She expected him to snarl, or strain against the Y of his length of chain. Instead, he took a slow breath, shifted his eyes to look past her to the counter where she'd set the packages of food, and pulled at a silver vacuum sealed bag that shot across the room into his hand. He turned his back to her, and returned to sit on the exam table.

He didn't watch her leave.

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TBC.

A/N: Thank you, AI, for being magic and fixing the middle of this chapter with your mind ray. Stay tuned, peeps, we're going to continue this burn for awhile, but it'll be worth it, I promise.

## 6. Chapter 6

Disclaimer: Not mine, in any way, shape, or form. Not making money from this.

Author's note at the end.

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Toska

Chapter 6

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It was difficult for Kylo to judge time while confined to the med bay. He ate all three meals he'd been left and had wished for another before he saw Rey again, appearing in his doorway wiping grease and dirt from her hands with an equally filthy towel. The engines had only just hummed to life again in the last few minutes, after several false starts.

Rey looked exhausted, but far from breaking. In fact, there was an air of pride about her, and Kylo couldn't argue with the fact that her ability to keep this ancient ship running was impressive.

After leaning against his doorframe for a minute, studying him from the hallway, she moved in and tossed the rag in a bin. Her back was to him as the sound of the faucet running filled the otherwise silent room.

From where he sat on the floor, against the wall his chain was attached to, Kylo watched her scrub at her hands. She applied soap, rubbing alcohol, and some kind of nutty-smelling oil in sequence, rubbing a harsh sponge all the way up to her elbow on her right forearm while carefully avoiding soiling the bandage she still wore over the burn on her left.

After several minutes, Kylo cleared his throat. "You know there's a 'fresher near the bunks?"

"Despite your recent inhabitation, this is not your room," Rey replied without turning to look at him. She shook her hands, turned off the faucet, and grabbed a clean towel from a shelf above her to dry herself off. "Engine's running again. Still no hyperdrive, but we've got movement, at least."

"So I noticed. However, if you were expecting me to be overjoyed by that news, you should consider that heading toward a Resistance tribunal carries an only slightly longer life expectancy for me than being marooned in space does," Kylo pointed out. "You realize they're going to interrogate me, and when I don't talk, they'll turn to torture, and when they realize that won't work either, they'll execute me."

Rey's skin crawled at the detached way the man spoke of his own torture and death. "What's my alternative?" she asked. "Let you escape? How many more innocent lives can I save by blocking your return to the First Order?"

"I don't believe I'll enjoy captivity," Kylo mused, his eyes hard. "I'll probably kill several members of the Resistance before they finally decide I'm more trouble in their containment section than I'm worth."

"You haven't managed to hurt me, yet." The 'yet' was not lost on Kylo. She still expected him to try.

He bobbed his head. "I needed medical treatment, I needed you to release my restraints, and despite my best efforts on several occasions to steal the Falcon as a child, I was never successful." When Rey frowned at him in confusion, he clarified, "I can't pilot this ship by myself."

"You need me," Rey stated.

A muscle tensed in Kylo's jaw before he lifted his chin. Yes, he needed her.

"You don't have to admit that very much, do you?" Rey looked down at the water jug she'd left Kylo the last time she'd visited. It was empty. How long ago had he run out? "Toss me that," she added, pointing at the container.

Rather than displaying strict obedience, Kylo moved from his position on the floor, straightening slowly, and snagging the empty jug on his way toward Rey. When he reached his limit, he held out one cuffed hand, offering what she'd requested. Beginning to tire of the invisible wall that separated them, Rey sighed and grabbed the container from Kylo without ceremony and turned to refill it in the sink.

Since Kylo had improved enough to feed himself and tend his own wounds, Rey had given him a fairly wide berth, avoiding the areas of the med bay he could reach. Once the jug was full, she capped it and, throwing caution to the wind, strode over to set it on the flat metal expanse of the med table.

As she passed Kylo on her way back toward the door, he caught at her, grabbing her uninjured forearm in his large hand. Rey flicked her

eyes down to his fingers, encircling her wrist, before looking up to see he was watching her reaction carefully. He tensed, as if preparing to take action, but immediately seemed to decide against it when Rey didn't pull away, though she was obviously ready to do so if necessary.

"I don't appreciate being kept as your pet, and I'm going to try to escape the minute we land. You know that, don't you?" he murmured.

Rey gave an experimental tug at her wrist, but Kylo held firm, tightening his grip.

"I thought you said with enough time you could free yourself from those chains?" Rey challenged. "Why wait until we land? You could have the run of the ship until we get where we're going."

"I could, but I assume you'd take it as an act of aggression. I'm unarmed, while \_you \_likely have multiple weapons stashed around these corridorsâ€¦" Kylo's lip curled briefly in frustration. "...including my grandfather's lightsaber."

Rey rolled her eyes. "I'm sure you've killed people with your bare hands before," she said with derision. "Don't pretend the lack of a weapon makes me the expected victor in that scenario."

"I told you I wouldn't underestimate you again," Kylo reminded her. "And I also told you I can't pilot this ship alone. I don't benefit from stolen freedom and a confrontation with you at the moment."

Fighting a flush that threatened to deepen on her skin, Rey pulled more forcefully at her wrist. "Let me go," she demanded firmly.

"What a familiar request," Kylo said, his voice ironically light. Casually lifting his other hand, he rattled the chain attached to the cuff.

"You just said you didn't want to be freed-" Rey argued.

"I said it did me no good to \_escape\_, " Kylo corrected. "Release me, and I'll teach you what you want to know."

With a violent twist that left her hand sore and her skin red, Rey wrenched her arm away from Kylo and retreated to the far end of the room, scowling. "And like \_I \_said," she spat, "I don't trust you enough to teach me anything. I hate what you stand for. I hate the things you've doneâ€¦" Rey closed her eyes, wincing briefly. "And I \_hate \_that you're the only one I have to talk to aboard this ship." With a grunt of disgust, she backed up against the cabinets near the door and slid down them to sit on the floor, adding under her breath, "I don't even have a \_droid\_â€¦"

Her reaction piqued Kylo's curiosity, and he dropped casually to the ground where he had been standing, folding his long legs in front of himself in a relaxed version of the position he used most often for meditation.

With a huffed exhale, Rey rubbed at her eyes. "Regardless... I don't

think of you as a pet," she begrudgingly assured him. "Though I don't know why that would be so bad," she muttered.

Opening her eyes, she noticed Kylo was staring at her in the way she'd become accustomed to: as if he were waiting for her to continue talking. Rey conceded defeat, and groaned as she stretched her legs straight out in front of her.

"There was an old woman on Jakkuâ€¦ I'd see her frequently at Niima outpost. I never knew her name, but one day she arrived with this small, fur-coveredâ€¦ \_thing\_â€¦ following her. It was so overgrown and matted that you couldn't tell one end from the other; couldn't tell what kind of animal it wasâ€¦" Rey stared, unseeing, at the far wall. "She'd feed it what she could spare, and pretty soon they were inseparable. The thing smelled worse than anything at the outpost, and didn't appear to benefit her in any wayâ€¦ If anything, she had to do with less, because she gave it some of her portions each time she earned any. Butâ€¦" Rey shook her head, frowning. "I used to watch her as I cleaned scrapâ€¦ for hoursâ€¦ She'd sit and stroke that mess of hair and dirt as it lay across her lap. She seemed so happy."

"And you wished you could be that woman."

"No," Rey sighed. "I spent years wishing I was the damn animal."

"What happened to it?"

"The woman died in a fight at the outpost." Kylo couldn't help but notice the hollow quality Rey's voice took on. "And I never saw the thing again."

The pair lapsed into silence for a moment before Rey spoke again.

"You said you don't have friends. I'm sure the only contact you've had with other beings for the last ten years has been on the \_violent \_side. Butâ€¦ do you remember a time before you ran away? Do you remember... being touched?" Rey watched Kylo for a long moment, but the man didn't move and didn't speak, his expression guarded. Rey shook her head, feeling ridiculous for entertaining the thought that her query would be dignified with a response. "Finn gave me a hug when he found me in your base," she said quietly. "I can count on one hand the number of times in my life that I remember someone touching me out of kindness."

"You backed away from me the last time you were in here," Kylo reminded her.

Rey frowned. "I'm not asking you to-"

"Why not?" When Rey didn't respond, Kylo raised his eyebrows in silent repetition of his question, and extended an open hand toward her as if he were offering her something from his empty palm.

Rey gave a half-hearted sneer. "A moment ago you were trying to bruise my arm," she pointed out.

"And a few days ago you carved up my face," Kylo volleyed

back.

"Seems like we should keep our distance," Rey suggested.

"Or we could agree to a mutually beneficial truce." Kylo adjusted his open palm into the position of a proffered handshake.

Rey studied Kylo's extended hand with suspicion for so long that he had decided to withdraw it when she finally moved. She crawled cautiously toward him, pushing forward onto her hands and knees to close the few feet between them in order to reach his hand.

As soon as she'd slipped her right hand into his, he tightened his grip and yanked her toward him, causing her to tumble forward unbalanced. Her eyes flared with anger and betrayal as she scrambled to get her feet under her again, kicking herself for being gullible enough to allow-

Kylo reached up with his free hand and placed a gentle palm on Rey's face. She froze, her eyes locked on his.

Logic told her that allowing him to do this was a completely inadvisable move, but she couldn't seem to make herself pull away, and when his fingers moved against her neck, curling softly behind her ear, she gave a harsh pant, blowing out a breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding. Her eyes slipped closed, and she leaned into his hand briefly before making a defeated sound at the back of her throat and pulling away with a wince.

She stood quickly and disappeared into the corridor faster than Kylo had ever seen her move.

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TBC.

A/N: I honestly thought we'd be further along by now, but these two lovely idiots are apparently campaigning for the Slowest Burn In A Fanfic Based On A TV Show Or Movie award. At this pace, I think they're a shoe-in, so I hope they're getting their acceptance speeches in order. Thanks for your patience, and a massive THANK YOU to those who have taken the time to review! You rock my little world. :) Also? Buckle up, because I think I'm meaner to this kids in the next chapter.

## 7. Chapter 7

Disclaimer: Not mine, in any way, shape, or form. Not making money from this.

Author's note at the end.

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Toska

Chapter 7

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Rey walked slowly around the curve of the corridor that led to the med bay. The crashes and thumps had been going on for a few minutes now, and she worried what level of destruction she was going to find when she got there.

She was two steps from rounding the doorway into the room when a metal object sailed out past her head and crashed into the opposite wall. Various objects littered the hallway. Rey shoved the rest of what she'd been eating into her mouth and unclipped the lightsaber she'd grabbed when the sounds first started. She held the hilt in her hand but didn't ignite it, slowly peering around the corner with a glare.

Kylo sat on the floor against the wall, one elbow propped up on his bent knee, the other leg stretched, unconcerned, into the room. He tilted his head as he noted his captor's arrival.

"Did these things insult you in some way?" Rey asked around her mouthful of food. She swallowed as she gestured at the pile of items in the corridor with her unlit lightsaber.

"Ah. So we're \_not \_out of food," Kylo said pointedly. "Good to know."

Rey closed her eyes, guilt keeping her from complaining about his method of getting her attention and the mess he'd made. Without acknowledging his sarcasm, she disappeared down the hall again. When she reappeared, she was carrying a large, unopened box full of pre-packaged meals which she set on the exam table. Turning to face Kylo, she produced a large fruit from one of her pockets and held it out toward him.

"If you like these," she qualified, her cold tone somewhat blunting the purity of the gesture.

Kylo stared at the offer. Chewbacca must have been the last one to pack the Falcon's food stores. Those used to be his favorite; Kylo assumed they still were. He gave a small nod and went to stand in order to take it from her, but instead Rey closed the difference between them and stopped, her smaller frame towering above him.

She wondered if he could tell the move was calculated.

Kylo tilted his head to look up at Rey. Without breaking eye contact he reached up and took the fruit from her. A second fruit was pulled from another pocket in her tunic, and she turned to sit down against the wall next to Kylo, propping both of her knees up in front of her while she inspected her snack.

"Don't get used to these," she cautioned. "Most of them have already gone bad. These are the last two I thought were edible."

Kylo nodded, taking a bite of his. The pair chewed in silence for a moment, somewhere between suspicion and acceptance.

"So you've finally decided it's safe to be on this side of the room?" Kylo asked.

"No-one's ever safe, not really," Rey disagreed, pulling a seed from

her mouth. She frowned at it, realizing she had nowhere to put it in her current position.

Before she could move, Kylo raised a hand and one of the empty metal jars he'd tossed into the hall earlier sped back into the room into his waiting grip. He set the container down between them, leaning over to spit a seed in himself before glancing up to see that Rey was still looking out into the corridor at the other objects.

"Anytime" Kylo reminded her.

Rey shook her head, declining his offer of instruction once more.

Kylo shrugged. "And before the castigation starts, nothing out there was breakable."

Several minutes later, after the last bites were consumed, Kylo wiped his hands on the fabric covering his thighs and turned to look at Rey. She'd left twelve inches of space between them when she sat down earlier, and as she swallowed the last of her food she twisted slightly to find the metal jar between them to toss the center pit into. Frowning, she inspected her hands, which were both covered in the rusty orange juice from the fruit. Without any hesitation, she stuck her thumb into her mouth for a moment before pulling it out clean. She repeated the action methodically with her index finger, middle finger, and ring finger.

As she inclined her head to finish with the fifth, Rey felt a strong grip on her other wrist that lifted her hand into the air. Kylo's chains hit the side of the metal jar with a sharp clang as her thumb was enveloped in warmth. Kylo's lips wrapped around the base and he ran his tongue along the length of it, encased in his mouth.

Rey watched as he pulled her hand away from his lips. There was a slight pause before her index finger disappeared into his mouth in the same way. When he rotated her hand and angled toward her third finger, she tensed her arm, attempting to pull it back toward herself.

Since Kylo's strength won, this only served to turn her body toward him, and he took quick advantage of her proximity. His other hand hooked under one of her bent knees, and he dragged her swiftly into his lap, her legs straddling his hips. As soon as she was there, his hands lifted off of her and he leaned back against the wall behind him to stare at her pointedly.

He wasn't holding her there. She could leave.

Rey considered her options wildly. He'd had multiple opportunities to hurt her- kill her- -since they came onboard, and he hadn't. He had confessed he couldn't fly the ship alone; he needed her.

Of course, he could be lying about all of it.

"Why are you doing this?" Rey asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

"You're not the only person in the system who's been somewhat starved

for physical contact in their life." Rey continued to study Kylo's face carefully as he continued his clarification slowly, "I wouldn't exactly classify this as '\_torture\_'."

"And I just happen to be onboard andâ€¦ accessible?" Rey said, her eyes narrowed.

"You're \_powerful\_." Kylo grabbed at her hips, pulling them forward to seat her more firmly in his lap. "I respond to that." He ran his palms from her hips up onto her back, pulling her toward him as he angled his face up toward hers.

Rey laced her fingers through the long hair at the back of Kylo's head and tightened her hands into fists, arching his neck and pulling his head back away from her. Her action didn't seem to bother him, and he puffed out a breath before straining his neck forward again, trying to reach her.

Rey held firm. "I'm not going to kiss you," she vowed, even as she deliberately shifted her hips, and Kylo tensed under her, his fingers pressing into her back.

"Why not?" he asked, his breath ragged.

Rey wished she could control the frantic beating of her heart and the pace of her own breathing. "Because I don't trust you."

Kylo's expression darkened. "At any point in the last few minutes I could have wrapped one of these chains around your neck and-"

"Is the fact that you only \_considered\_ \_doing\_ that supposed to win you points?" Rey interrupted sharply.

"You can't tell me you haven't had a contingency plan for every moment you've been in this room today," Kylo countered, dropping his right hand to wind up a length of his chain around it. "Right now, if I did anything at all that you thought-"

Rey dropped her hands to Kylo's chest for leverage as she pushed back from him, her knee coming up sharply into his injured flank. Kylo gave a rough grunt and rolled his head to the side as if he could hide his reaction from her if he looked in a different direction. Rey scrambled off of his lap as he hissed a breath out slowly through gritted teeth, his palms braced flat on the ground at his sides.

After a long moment, Rey leaned forward again slowly, reaching for the edge of Kylo's tunic. "When was the last time you changed this?" she asked quietly, unwilling to formally apologize.

Kylo looked back in her direction in time to catch her wrist before she could try to address his wound. "It's fine," he said, his voice a low, aggressive rumble.

"Is it healing?" Rey pressed.

"As fast as it's going to, yes," Kylo said tightly. "It doesn't happen overnight."

Rey stared evenly at Kylo until he released her hand, and she stood,

backing up several paces toward the door. "You know you're really lucky," she pointed out. "If Chewie had been a better shot, you'd be dead."

Kylo shook his head. "This was intentional," he said. Rey paused in the doorway, and he continued, "When I was a kid, he'd pick me up for fun; to get a closer look at an X-Wing engine; so I could reach a higher tree branch. My parents worried that he wasn't careful enough with me, but he promised my father that he wouldn't drop me." Kylo glanced down at his left side. "I know this was a tough shot from so far away, but his aim was always perfect. If he'd actually wanted to..." Kylo looked up at Rey. "This was him still keeping his promise. Not to drop me."

Rey stood, unmoving, until Kylo took a deep breath and broke eye contact. "Thank you for the fruit," he murmured with finality, as if his statement was a dismissal of some sort.

Rey nodded, and left.

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TBC.

A/N: Seriously, this angst may be getting out of hand. I meanâ€| This is "whump" territory I've wandered into, I think. Thank you again to everyone who has taken the time to read and review, and last but not least, I have to give credit for the "don't drop him" story to an amazing, feels-inducing tumblr post I used as inspiration (read: somewhat blatantly stole the idea from). queerly-it-is. tumblr post / 136631561443 / chewie-with-a-little-sling-attached-to-his

## 8. Chapter 8

Disclaimer: Not mine, in any way, shape, or form. Not making money from this.

Author's note at the end.

â€|:::...

Toska

## Chapter 8

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Rey rounded the corner of the doorway and pulled up short in the medbay, her steps stuttering to a stop. Kylo was standing next to the exam table, his torso twisted to one side as he secured a new dressing over his wound. The edge of his torn and burned tunic was held up between his teeth to allow use of both of his hands.

With a sigh, Rey walked toward him. "Here, let me help." Turning him away from the table, she surveyed the supplies spread out over the flat silver surface. Glancing back at Kylo, she added, "This will probably be easier if you just take off your tunic. It's ruined anyway. I'm sure I can find you a different-"

Kylo let the fabric fall away from his mouth and gave a firm tug with one arm, rattling the chains of his restraints in lieu of a verbal explanation.

He couldn't take his tunic off unless Rey released his wrists.

"Nevermind," Rey mumbled. She grabbed a handful of small, clean-smelling wipes and surveyed Kylo's face. She was aware that there was no mirror in the medbay, and her prisoner had only been able to guess what the damage to his own face looked like. "This looks a lot better," she found herself assuring him as she reached up to gently brush at the remaining crust the bacta treatments had left.

Kylo held completely still, his gaze slanted away toward the other side of the room.

Rey tossed the used wipes down on the table and grabbed another handful. "Why are you so tall?" she muttered under her breath, frowning as she raised her hands up again.

Kylo's eyes cut back to her quickly, and before she could touch him she felt strong hands wrap around her waist, just below her ribs, lifting and depositing her on the exam table. She froze for a moment, her hand in midair. Seated on the cold metal surface, she was now eye-level with Kylo.

She nodded once, acknowledging that the new position was, in fact, easier. She worked quickly, cleaning the long, healing slash she'd left on his face. Since it was no longer an open wound, she skipped the bacta and applied an odorless oil, smoothing it across the scarred skin. Rey glanced at the array of various other bandages and dressings littering the table next to her. There was a discarded tangle of elastic bandage that was discolored with blood sitting next to a fresh roll still in its packaging, which Rey picked up.

"Around your ribs?" she guessed, turning back to Kylo. He nodded, reaching for it. "I've got it," she said, pulling his tunic up again. "Hold this," she instructed, bunching the fabric up over his chest. He took it from her wordlessly.

Rey had to lean quite close to him each time she passed the bandage around his back, and she got a good look at the bruise that extended up across Kylo's ribs, away from the bandage covering his wound. Her rhythm faltered slightly when it occurred to her that any broken ribs wouldn't have been caused by a bowcaster bolt; they were more than likely a self-inflicted injury. She remembered him pounding on his side in desperation as they faced off in the snow.

"You should rub oil over the scar on your face more often," she recommended, trying to bring herself back to the present and away from uncomfortable memories of the man in front of her. "The skin will tighten, and you might lose some of the elasticity along the line of the scar. It'll tug when you- -well, actually, you probably won't even notice it, since you don't seem the type of man to ever smile."

Rey glanced up at Kylo's face. There was a barely perceptible lift to one of his eyebrows, without which Rey would have seriously doubted

if the man had even recognized that her statement had been a joke.

"I'm familiar with how scars work," Kylo said.

Rey let her eyes wander from the bandage she was securing, passing over the rest of his exposed torso. "I can see that."

Kylo had constellations of well-healed wounds scattered across his skin. Rey lifted a hesitant hand and traced a finger along one as it ran from his sternum around his side and disappeared onto his back.

"None of these look recent," she commented.

"It's been a long time since anyone's scored a hit," Kylo replied, his voice low. "I'd bet you could say the same."

Rey cut her eyes back up to Kylo's. "No," she said. "Constant new scars are part of life on Jakku. Lots of mine are recent."

"If you learned how to harness your power, you wouldn't-"

"Stop with the offers to teach me," Rey interrupted with a harsh sigh, leaning back slightly on the table as Kylo pulled his tunic back down over his body. "You're going to be handed over to the Resistance as soon as I get the subspace radio working again, and you'll-"

"No-one knows I'm on this ship with you," Kylo continued, ignoring the fact that Rey had begun speaking. "You haven't been able to contact anyone to even let them know you're alive if you have no radio. We could go anywhere- -you don't have to play a role for them-"

"I'm not playing a role!" Rey spat hotly, indignant. "I'm doing what's right! You torture and intimidate and murder! Why would I go anywhere with you?"

"If I'm such a liability, why haven't you just gotten rid of me?" Kylo asked, his voice still infuriatingly calm. Leaning toward Rey, he braced his hands on the edge of the table on either side of her hips. This brought his face down level with hers, and the fact that Rey was now pinned on three sides by her own prisoner was not lost on her.

"Why did you save me?" Kylo continued. "Bring me on this ship? Make sure this hole in my side didn't kill me?" Kylo took a step back and bent further at the waist, dropping his torso down several inches in front of her. Her head was now slightly higher than his, and she glared down at him in silence.

"You've been quietly trying to rehabilitate me since you dragged me out of the snow," Kylo murmured, looking up at Rey. "What's the point of rehabilitation if you're just going to turn me over to the Resistance?"

Rey swallowed. "I'm trapped on a ship with you for the foreseeable future. I want to feel as safe as possible."

"You muzzle a violent animal when you want to feel safe," Kylo corrected her, his eyes dropping to her mouth as he spoke. "You don't get close enough to test if they'll \_bite you\_."

"You think of yourself as a violent animal?"

"Don't you?" he countered.

Rey's brows knit together in confusion. "What was it that made you into a monster?"

"Does it matter?" he asked, tilting his head with an air of resignation. "If you understand why a monster is a monsterâ€¦ does it make it any less of one?"

Losing patience with Kylo's banter, Rey pushed gently at one of Kylo's hands, sliding off the table and moving away from him. She began to collect the unused materials and return them to their drawers and cupboards. "You've mentioned escapingâ€¦ either alone, or with meâ€¦ And you've mentioned being turned over to the Resistance. As if those are the only two possible outcomes."

"Your point? You see a potential third option for me?" he asked with a touch of sarcasm.

Rey shrugged. "When I brought you on board I thought you'd wake up with warnings about what the First Order would do to me; how they would reign down terror on the Resistance and everyone I'd ever met once they came to find you. How you were a powerful member of a powerful organization and I should return you to them in order to avoid a slow and painful death."

Kylo said nothing, but raised his eyebrows in surprise at the authoritative and frankly vicious organization of threats she'd strung together. It sounded appropriate.

Rey closed the final cupboard and turned back to Kylo, crossing her arms over her chest as she awaited his answer.

After a moment spent studying the confident posture of his captor, Kylo began a slow walk toward her. "It's in your best interest to let me go immediately," he said, his voice soft, but carefully emotionless as he dutifully lobbed her own words back at her. "The First Order will reign down terror on everyone you've ever met once they find you're the one holding me here. I'm a powerful member of a powerful organization, and your continued detainment of me only ensures one thing: your eventual \_slow\_... and painful death." He stopped just inches in front of Rey, and his voice quieted even further as he looked down at her. "Better?"

The pair stood, eyes locked for a long moment. Kylo's chains clanked as he raised one hand to gently push an errant strand of hair from Rey's forehead.

"I'm going to go work on the radio," Rey said softly, holding Kylo's gaze evenly. "I want to let the Resistance know I'm alive. And that they should prepare to receive you." Unfolding her arms, she walked quietly from the room without looking back.

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TBC.

A/N: Seriously, this is ridiculous. Original outline had their hands down each other's pants by this chapter. I don't know what's going on. Someone please explain to this pair that we want some action? Because they're clearly not listening to me.

End  
file.